TALENT MANAGEMENT IN SABAH AL-AHMAD CENTER FOR GIFTEDNESS AND CREATIVITY (SACGC) IN KUWAIT

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ABSTRACT

Talent management (TM) emerges from the need to utilize highly efficient and talented employees, one of the main factors that canmaximize an organization's performance. This paper provides a review of what TM is and how TM can be applied in Sabah Al-Ahmad Center for Giftedness and Creativity (SACGC) in Kuwait. The results show that teachers strongly agree that the administration in SACGC in Kuwait implements professional development. Teachers also agree that the administration clearly applies incentive where appropriate. Age and the length of work period were not statistically, significantly found to affect teachers' perceptions. The paper recommends that newly recruited teachers should be well prepared by their pre-service training courses. Moreover, providing more incentives will increase teachers' professional performance.

KEYWORDS: Talent Management, Professional Development, Incentive

INTRODUCTION

Statement of the Problem

Managing human resources (HR) is an essential challenge facing organizations around the world. HR management reflects the standards of organization and indicates how they should act to achieve their aims. Moreover, good HR managementclarifies how administrations shouldemploy their workers and how to bringout the best in them.Becausetalent is a fundamental feature thatinfluences work progress, much attention is given to talented individuals in organizations. Talent management (TM) has received considerable attention since the 1990s.Defined simply, TM is a process in which organizations recruit, manage, assess, and develop the most talented people (Khatri, Gupta, Gulati & Chauhan, 2010). This definition is more like what Hughes and Rog (2008) claimed talent management to be, namely, "both an espoused and enacted commitment to implementing an integrated, strategic and technology-enabled approach to HRM, with a particular focus on human resource planning, including employee recruitment, retention, development and succession practices, ideally for all employees but especially for those identified as having high potential or in key positions" (p. 746). TM is a proactive, ongoing activity that revolves around those employees having high potential. Achieving the integration between employees and their jobs canimprove their potential and stimulate their creative energies.In Kuwait, especially in the field of education, special focus is given to talented students and teachers, which was one of the reasons for establishing Sabah Al-Ahmad Center for Giftedness and Creativity(SACGC) in 2012. At this pilot stage, the center consists of two primary schools.Teachers in these schools were identifiedand then selected for their talent.These talented teachers should be managed appropriately through the concept and tools of TM. This paper aims to

identify how TM works at SACGC. Specifically the paper attempts to answer the following questions:

- How do teachers at SACGC perceive the professional development programs?

- How do teachers at SACGC perceive the allocated incentives?

- Are there any significant differences in teachers' perceptionsaccording to age and the length of work period?
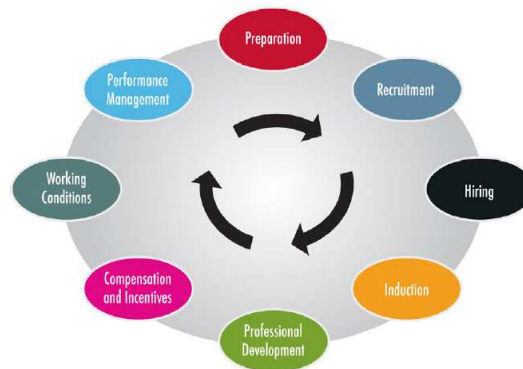
Talent Management

Figure 1: Educator Talent Management Components (From Behrstock et al., 2010)

Behrstock, Meyer, Wraight, and Bhatt (cited in Behrstock, 2010) proposed a talent management model for educators; in that model, they perceived eight components: preparation, recruitment, hiring, induction, professional development, compensation and incentives, working condition, and performance management (see Figure 1). Behrstock explains the components as follows:

- **Preparation:** Institutions are keen on developing effective training programs for teachers, using various pedagogical approaches.

- **Recruitment:** Recruiting is a process in which highly skillful, professional employees are selected and then chosen, if they desire, for the institution.

- **Hiring:** Professional information is shared between institutions and candidate teachers.

- **Induction:** Newly recruited teachers are involved in high-quality monitoring programs.

- **Professional Development:** Development programs should be attainable for all recruited teachers.

- **Compensation and Incentives:** Rewards, such as promotions and higher salaries, are given to teachersaccording to their performance.

- **Work Conditions:** Teachers should be engaged in a positive school climate with suitable facilities.

- **Performance Management:** Teachers must be evaluated regularly with clear feedback given. Performance management should be related to teachers'goals, professional development, and incentives.

According to the model in Figure 1, professional development (PD) is a continuous process, enabling all teachers toachievehigher performance.Teachers are responsible for different duties at their schools, such as learning activities ordeveloping curriculum. These duties have created the need for appropriate training programs tomeet teachers'requests.

Hassel (1999) has statedthat to achievePD goals, three components should be taken into consideration: content, process, and activities. PD content means the topic knowledge, skills, or competencies that teachers should haveto achieve PD goals. PD goals should followfrom student education goals. The PD process can be divided into two parts: (1) the PD organizing process, or the methodology that stakeholders adopt to ensure that the right content is selected; and (2) the process used within the activities, like workshops, team discussions, and observation, which reflect the educational goals.Incentives can be characterized as competitive catalysts that are thought to be an essential ingredient in organizational survival (Robbins & Judge, 2012).

Significance of the Study

The significance of this study lies in identifying the strengths and weaknesses of managing PD programs and incentives at SACGC. The lack of research related to TM in Kuwait makes this a topic needing further investigation.

Study Limitation

Although the education TM model proposed by Behrstock (Behrstock, 2010) is composed of eight components, this study discussed only two components: professional development and incentives. This limitation is because the Ministry of Education in Kuwait fully controls the other six components.

METHODOLOGY

Instrumentation

This study was based on the surveydeveloped by Mahmoud and Awadallah (2013) to achieve the study objectives and was modified to suit the Kuwaiti context.The responses were measured on a five-point Likert-type scale (5=strongly agree, 4=agree, 3=neutral, 2=disagree, 1=strongly disagree) for positively phrased statements. The reliability coefficient for PD was 0.68 and incentives was 0.8, indicating that the instruments were reliable. No negative feedback was reported with respect to the clarity of the instruments used, indicating that the statements were clear and understandable.

Participants

The study covered the whole population (i.e., the teachers at SACGC) in the State of Kuwait in the second semester 2014. The population demographic characteristics were age, work period.

Procedures

Having obtained the required permissions, researchers distributedthe questionnaires among the participants. When the questionnaires were collected, theywere codified and processed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS). Descriptive statistics and regressionanalyses were used to report the findings.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

The findings showed that to a high degree, the teachers agreed that the center administration runs PD programs (M = 4.3; SD = 0.5); however, the results showed that the teachers did not perceive the incentives used by the administration in the same way. Their perceptions were less positive (M = 3.5; SD = 0.7). Additionally, the regression analysis showed no statistically significant differences ($p \leq 0.5$) among the teachers' perceptions concerning the components of PD and incentives in terms of age or the length of work period.

SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This study aimed at exploring how teachers in SACGC perceived the state of TM in terms of PD and incentives. The results indicate that teachers' perceptions of PD provided by the SACGC administration were strongly high, whereas their perceptions toward incentives were only reasonably high. Age and the length of work period were not found to predict the teachers' perceptions. Based on these findings, it is recommended that the SACGC administration should increase the PD opportunities and events, and to enhance the incentives because those incentives are thought to keep talented individuals at SACGC.

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